



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

FACT SHEET

INFORMATION ABOUT SARS

A NEW DISEASE CALLED SARS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is investigating a new disease called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The disease was first reported among people in Guangdong Province (China), Hanoi (Vietnam), and Hong Kong. It has since spread to other countries. As of April 1, more than 70 cases of SARS had been reported in the United States. This fact sheet describes the disease and important guidelines for preventing the spread of SARS.

SYMPTOMS OF SARS

In general, SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4°F [$>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$]. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms. After 2 to 7 days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing.

HOW SARS SPREADS

Public health experts think that SARS is spread by close contact between people. SARS is most likely spread when someone sick with the disease coughs droplets into the air and someone else breathes them in. It is possible that SARS also can spread more broadly through the air or from touching objects that have become contaminated. To find out more about SARS, go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/ and www.who.int/csr/sars/en/. The Web sites are updated daily.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR SARS

Cases of SARS continue to be reported mainly among people who have had direct close contact with an infected person, such as those sharing a household with a SARS patient and health care workers who did not use infection control procedures while taking care of a SARS patient. In the United States, there is no indication of community spread at this time. CDC continues to monitor this situation very closely.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF

CDC has issued interim guidelines for patients with suspected SARS in the healthcare setting and in households. These guidelines may change as we learn more about SARS. If you get sick with the symptoms described above and have been in close contact with someone who might have SARS, see your health care provider and follow the guidelines below.

GUIDELINES

If you think you (or someone in your family) might have SARS, you should:

- Consult a health care provider as soon as possible.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you have a surgical mask, wear it during close contact with other people. A mask can reduce the number of droplets coughed into the air.

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If you have SARS and are being cared for at home, you should:

- Follow the instructions given by your health care provider.
- Limit your activities outside the home during this 10-day period. For example, do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- Wash your hands often and well, especially after you have blown your nose.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- If possible, wear a surgical mask when around other people in your home. If you can't wear a mask, the members of your household should wear one when they are around you.
- Don't share silverware, towels, or bedding with anyone in your home until these items have been washed with soap and hot water.
- Clean surfaces (counter or tabletops, door knobs, bathroom fixtures, etc.) that have been contaminated by body fluids (sweat, saliva, mucous, or even vomit or urine) from the SARS patient with a household disinfectant used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Wear disposable gloves during all cleaning activities. Throw these out when you are done. Do not reuse them.
- Follow these instructions for 10 days after your fever and respiratory symptoms have gone away.

If you are caring for someone at home who has SARS, you should:

- Be sure that the person with SARS has seen a health care provider and is following instructions for medication and care.
- Be sure that all members of your household are washing their hands frequently with soap and hot water or using alcohol-based hand wash.
- Wear disposable gloves if you have direct contact with body fluids of a SARS patient. However, the wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand hygiene. After contact with body fluids of a SARS patient, remove the gloves, throw them out, and wash your hands. Do not wash or reuse the gloves.
- Encourage the person with SARS to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If possible, the person with SARS should wear a surgical mask during close contact with other people in the home. If the person with SARS cannot wear a surgical mask, other members of the household should wear one when in the room with that person.
- Do not use silverware, towels, bedding, clothing, or other items that have been used by the person with SARS until these items have been washed with soap and hot water.
- Clean surfaces (counter or tabletops, door knobs, bathroom fixtures, etc.) that have been contaminated by body fluids (sweat, saliva, mucous, or even vomit or urine) with a household disinfectant used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Wear disposable gloves during all cleaning activities. Throw these out when done. Do not reuse them.
- Follow these instructions for 10 days after the sick person's fever and respiratory symptoms have gone away.
- If you develop a fever or respiratory symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately and tell him or her that you have had close contact with a SARS patient.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

CDC protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations.

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